

Indiana Kirk and the Traitors of the Frost Park

By WrenWings

The serenity of the unsuspecting August evening was fractured by an ear-splitting crash, as a multitudinous battalion of glass shards screamed through the air. For a brief moment, the hallway lit up in a dazzling kaleidoscope of color as the diaphanous shards of glass performed their prismatic duties. A split second later, darkness descended as it all slammed to the floor in an unseemly heap. As red lights flashed and sirens sounded, a hooded figure uncrumpled from the pile of broken glass and rose slowly. Holding his cracked ribs, Carter winced in pain as he looked back over his shoulder. This was it: the moment of truth, the last chance to turn back from the mission. Though the searing pain from his side forced momentary indecision, he took a deep breath, and his esperance for the plan reinvigorated his resolve. Amidst the blaring sirens, the lone figure took a final deep breath. The door at the far end of the hall slammed open. Two guards stormed in, furious that this intruder threatened their livelihood. Carter's eyes remained closed, seemingly meditating, as the guards scrambled down the hallway. The doors on the near side of the hallway crashed open as two more livid guards scurried through. As all four guards converged in rage, Carter took a step backwards. Before any of the guards were quite in striking distance, Carter bolted across the hallway at full gallop. Without slowing down, he rammed through the office door and picked up speed towards the opposite side of the room. With the guards in hot pursuit, Carter launched himself into the air, smashing through the exterior window. Struggling to stay conscious, free falling from the 89th

story of the skyscraper he had just jumped out of, Carter started to question the series of decisions that had led him here.

12 hours earlier

Exactly three students in Professor Carter Kirk's Wildlife Management class were even remotely paying attention anymore. 73 minutes into his 90-minute lecture, Carter decided a change of tack was necessary. As the hot August breeze slowly drifted into the classroom, the lecture paused. A few weary eyes looked up from their laptop screens as Professor Kirk launched into a seemingly unrelated tirade.

"Mark Twain once said 'It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them.' Never has his point been more salient. Nobody thinks for themselves anymore. 99% of society consists entirely of mindless zombies grafting themselves as gargoyle cogs onto the ever turning wheel of capitalism."

Noticing a couple confused looks, he decided to truncate his grand speech.

"My point is this: nobody cares about art or nature or anything that really matters. It's all about making more money than your competitor. Movie studios should be lining up at the door to help Martina Morsese create another artistic masterpiece, but is that the case? No! Instead, they'll make another Larval Comics movie about Butterfly-Man and add the 59th soulless film to the LCU. How does this apply to wildlife management, you ask? Well, I'm glad you asked, *Tina*."

An embarrassed Tina shook herself awake as Professor Kirk continued.

“All over the world animals are trapped in cages their whole lives. Not because of a few morally abominable hunters, but because of a society that allows, nay, encourages the practice. Nobody cares about the animals themselves, they only see them as objects to be ogled at.”

The bell rang loudly as Carter finished his train of thought.

“If you only take one thing away from this course, I want you to remember that the best form of wildlife management is to let wildlife manage wildlife.”

Students began to file out of the room. As the professor packed his things, a timid Tina trudged up to his desk.

“Yes?” Carter asked.

“Professor Kirk, I saw a story on Tak-Tok the other day about a private animal preserve about an hour north of here that kidnapped half a family of Capuchin Monkeys from Panama. I was wondering if we could stage a protest at the school?” Tina asked.

Although Professor Carter ended the conversation with a vague non-committal answer, his alter ego, Indiana Kirk, would have something more to say.

The present. Falling from the 89th story.

As his brain struggled to retain oxygen, Carter tried to focus, counting the building floors flashing by. At the 78th floor, he yanked the zip cord on his jacket with all his might. The jacket ballooned, revealing a pair of

paraglider wings. Hoping his calculations were correct, he started the long glide north. During the flight, he mulled over what he had learned on the 89th floor escapade. The family of Capucins had not yet been given a permanent residence, so they were still being kept in the maximum security vault underneath the security barracks. On the bright side, thanks to his morally ambiguous “research,” Mr. Kirk knew what the combination for the vault was. On the other hand, he also now knew that a code red lockdown would trigger in- he checked his watch- *3 minutes, 27 seconds*.

“Plenty of time,” he thought to himself as the Frost Park animal conservatory buildings rushed closer and closer. He landed on the security barracks rooftop with *2 minutes, 53 seconds* on the clock. Wasting no time, he picked the skylight lock and rappelled down from the rooftop. Sneaking up behind a couple of guards watching monitors at the security terminal, he quickly put them both to sleep in a deft movement with 1 chloroform covered cloth in each hand. *2 minutes, 3 seconds*. Time was running short now. Carter bolted for the staircase, sliding down 4 floors of railings.

Upon reaching the lowest floor, he encountered a giant vault door blocking entry. He checked his watch again. *1 minute, 17 seconds*. Unflappable, the fearless hero stepped up to the vault door and punched in the access code: *8378521*. To his bewilderment, the keypad rejected the code. Once again, he tried the access code: *8378521*. No luck. *57 seconds*. Now slightly flappable, Carter wracked his brain, trying to figure out why the code he had found in the corporate headquarters’ 89th floor was not working at the vault door. Then it hit him: the page with the vault code had an empty column in the middle of the page, due to the printer running out of ink. Thus, it was likely the access code had 1 or 2 additional digits. *49 seconds*. *83785211*. Unsuccessful. A few seconds later he reached *83785219*. Still no good. *23 seconds*. Slightly flustered now, Carter typed in *837852111*. Nope. As the time slipped under 10 seconds, hope started to wane. In a last ditch effort, Carter went with his gut and typed in a random combination for the

last 2 numbers. *837852195*. He checked his watch as time expired. To his shock, the keypad turned green and the vault door creaked open.

“That may have been pure luck,” he thought to himself. “But that was still 20 percent skill and 15 percent concentrated-” he stopped mid-sentence as alarms started blaring and the vault door started to swing shut.

Carter dove into the vault before it could close. Behind him, the reinforced steel door locked into place. Before him were the jubilant chirps of the 3 Capucins he was here to rescue. Without a word, all 3 understood they were in the presence of the ultimate monkey. Silently they climbed on his back and shoulders, ready for their escape. As Indiana Kirk began to inspect the vault for escape options, the sound of footsteps grew louder outside the vault. The audible clicking of the keypad prompted an idea. He went with the tried and true method of hanging from the ceiling, waiting to pounce when the guards entered. The door swung open. Carter tensed, ready to fight his way out. After a few seconds of silence, a voice rang out.

“I hope you aren’t resorting to hanging from the ceiling, that would be terribly predictable” the voice postulated in an amused tone.

“Of course not,” Carter replied defensively as he dropped down to the floor. “What are *you* doing here, Ria?”

“I was hired as a security consultant because we thought you might do something like this.” answered Ria calmly.

Ria Gweggert walked through the vault door, flanked by 2 guards holding tranquilizer rifles.

“Hello dear, what’s it been, 2 years?” asked Ria.

“Well that’s at least 2 years shorter than it should be” retorted Carter.

"You golden snub-nosed monkey! You know full well that it should have lasted longer. If it weren't for your obsession with danger, Indiana Kirk and Polis Ria would still be fighting for a better world to this day. Admit it, you miss us together."

"You are clearly deluded," Carter answered, "because here you are, once again on the wrong side of the line in the sand."

"Is *that* why you left?" Ria asked incredulously, "All because I told you 'The Sandsnake' was a terrible nickname?"

"First off, 'The Sandsnake' is a great nickname. Acting at night, seldom surfacing during the day, slithering out to strike fear into the hearts of evildoers. The scales of justice would hiss with anticipation. Second--"

As Carter continued to launch into a convoluted monologue about sandsnake diets and a hunger for justice, both the security guards looked at each other in confusion.

"Should we just tranquilize him now?" asked Tom, the security guard on Ria's left. Ria held up her hand.

"Hang on, he seems to be approaching his point."

"Well, you see," started Carter, "my point is this: I needed exactly 1 minute and 15 seconds to assemble a makeshift toy for my new Capucin brother here, Landry. He has a, shall we say, *flair* for the dramatic."

In the blink of an eye, Carter whipped out a flare from his utility belt, struck it, and tossed it in the air in one singular motion. Before the guards could react, Landry the Capucin tossed his gadget up in the air. The two objects collided and exploded in a dissonant symphony of blinding light. The guards fell to the floor, covering their eyes. As Carter started moving towards the door, a lone figure still proved a barrier.

"I thought you might fall back on that little trick," said Ria, sporting a pair of sunglasses.

"Well, I thought *you* might fall back on *that* little trick," Carter responded, before throwing the EMP grenade that had been hiding in his hand.

Like the flip of a switch, the room plunged into darkness. By the time Ria's eyes had adjusted, Indiana Kirk and his Capucin friends were long gone. As the excited Capucin screeches faded into the night, Ria Gweggert couldn't help but smile with a twinkle in her eye.

Aside from an empty vault, the only proof that Indiana Kirk had been here was a change of signs in the visitor center. The original sign contained a snippet from Robert Frost's "A Prayer in Spring": "*And make us happy in the darting bird.*" In its place was an excerpt from Frost's "The Bear":

"The world has room to make a bear feel free."